

tools of the trade

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**Health,
Stress,
Coping** *Health, Stress, and Coping.* Aaron Antonovsky. San Francisco:
Jossey-Bass, 1979. 227 pp. \$13.95.

Antonovsky offers detailed, research-based examinations of people's ability to deal with the inevitable stresses of everyday life. Noting that people differ in their abilities to manage stress and maintain health, Antonovsky examines the social and psychological resources people have to combat stress and resist illness. From recent findings in medical sociology, psychiatry, ego psychology, and cultural anthropology, he develops a theory to explain the relative success of certain people in certain social groups coping with stress.

Most of these people seem to share what Antonovsky calls "the sense of coherence"—a general orientation that sees life as meaningful and manageable. To find the sources of this orientation, he investigated the upbringings, social relationships, and cultural backgrounds of these people, and he shows that a wide variety of medical data tends to confirm his theory of how social structures and relationships foster coping and health.

He then demonstrates how these insights can be used to improve personal and social lives, relationships between health workers and patients, and the organization of health care services. Finally, he considers the general outlook for human health—both mental and physical—in the years ahead.